Hello St. Andrew Elementary.

Happy Black History Month.

My Name is Alethia O’Hara-Stephenson, President and Founder of the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association. I am also a TV Host and Author, but more importantly I am a wife and the mother of 3 amazing children.

Today’s presentation is titled Black Excellence, Past, Present and Future with a focus on Black history right here in Dufferin County. I going to encourage everyone to pay close attention as their might be a chance to win some prizes.

Before we start the presentation, id like to do something called a land acknowledgement and Ancestral Acknowledgement.

Does anyone one know what a land acknowledgement mean?

Well, it is a great way to honour and pay respect to our indigenous community. Those who took care of the land long before you and I ever existed. And the ancestral acknowlwdgement I do specifically to honour the many black Canadians who came before me and paved the way for us to be here today. This is a great way to honour and pay our respect. Just like how you would pay respect to your parents, your elders, and your teachers we also pay our respects to those who came before us.

Because I live in Shelburne, I’m going to share the land acknowlwdgement that I would normally use.

* **BLACK HISTORY IS CANADIAN HISTORY…**
* **IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT AND CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BLACK CANADIANS WHO HAVE AND THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS GREAT COUNTRY**

**How did come to Celebrate Black History Month in Canada?**

In 1995 the then parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, the Honorable Jean Augustine, put forward a motion to recognize February as Black History Month.

The Motion reads: That this House take note of the important contribution of black Canadians to the settlement, growth and development of Canada, the diversity of the black community in Canada and its importance to the history of this country, and recognize February as black history month

The Motion was unanimously approved by the House and as such paved the way for many future activities in celebration ofBHM

**WHY SHOULD I LEARN ABOUT BLACK HISTORY OR EVEN CARE ABOUT IT?**

*Regardless if its Black History Month, National Aboriginal Month, LGBQT+ Month…, The principles are the same. Treat each other with Respect, Dignity, Etc., Throughout the year not because a month compels us to do so!!*

**Black History In Dufferin   
The Past**

**Portable Pencil Sharpener**

**William & Mary Ghant**

* Moved to Melancthon Township with their two sons around 1849.
* The family owned more than 300 acres of farmland
* Produced an abundance of crops including oats, peas and barley.
* Tapped an average of 250 trees during maple syrup season.

**George Hannahson Sr. - Mono Township**

* George Hannahson, is the son of a black man and a white woman named Hannah Ketchum in the early 1800’s.
* George was given the last name of “Hannahson,” as in “Hannah’s son.”  The family did not want him to have the last name of “Ketchum.”
* George and his family ran a successful farm of 75 acres with six acres as pasture, one acre for orchard, 33 acres for wheat, nine acres for hay and smaller amounts scattered amongst oats, peas, and potatoes. The family had a large stock of animals as well: two horses, two fillies, three cows, six horned cattle, 18 sheep, 12 swine and four hives of bees.

Richard Pierpoint - West Garafraxa

* Richard Pierpoint endured twenty years of slavery, the dangerous life of a British soldier through two wars and, as a very old man, the hardships of settlement in the wild lands of Garafraxa Township, just across what is now the present-day border between Wellington and Dufferin County.
* Richard Pierpoint has a plaque in his honour in front of John Black Elementary School

Richard Pierpoint was one of the heroes of the War of 1812, the Fight for Canada, who was highlighted by the Government of Canada during Black History Month 2012. Pierpoint was a slave who won his freedom during the American Revolution and then settled in Canada. In 1812, he requested permission from Sir Isaac Brock to form an all black militia to help fight off the American invaders. The request was granted and thus, the “Coloured Corps” was formed.

To augment their numbers in the American Revolutionary War (1776-1783), British authorities offered freedom to enslaved Americans who enlisted with Loyalist troops. After twenty years of slavery, Pierpoint seized the opportunity to escape into the Niagara region and join the battalion known as Butler’s Rangers.

In 1820, the Upper Canadian government awarded Pierpoint a land grant in Garafraxa for his service in the Coloured Corps during the War of 1812.

To claim their land from the Crown, each settler had to clear five acres of bush, build a cabin and complete a road allowance along their property. Pierpoint, who had never married and was now in his seventies, would have relied on the assistance of his friends and neighbours to complete the tasks. He was granted ownership in 1826. For more information visit the Wellington County Museum & Archives online exhibit, "Richard Pierpoint: The Life of a Wellington County Pioneer".

**Fun Fact #1**

**John Lee Love (Pencil Sharpener)**

Born: Between 1865-1877

John Lee was a carpenter in Fall River, Massachusetts, who invented several devices. In 1895, Lee patented a lightweight plasterer’s hawk. In 1897, he patented a Portable Pencil Sharpener known as the “Love Sharpener.” His application specified that his invention was an “improved device” that could double as a paperweight or ornament. The design was simple, including a hand crank and a compartment to capture the pencil shavings

***Black History in Dufferin  
Present***

**Student Leaders**  
In November 2019 a delegation request was submitted to Dufferin County offices requesting an opportunity to present a Proclamation request to County Council. The request highlighted the contributions and accomplishments of notable blacks in Dufferin County that included past, present and future. Past included William and Mary Ghant who settled in Melancthon and cleared over 300 acres of land and was able to maintain a thriving farm***.***

***Fun Fact #2***

Viola Desmond

Viola Desmond

Activist & Business Owner.   
Fought to end segregation in Nova Scotia after being arrested for sitting in a main floor movie theatre seat.

Was posthumously pardoned in 2010

In 2018, she became the first Canadian woman featured on a regularly circulating Canadian $10 bill

Museum of Dufferin Display

Young Activists – Today’s Heroes

Fun Fact #3

George crum – Potato Chip

Born: July 15, 1824, in Saratoga Springs, New York

George Crum was a renowned African American Chef who worked at Moon’s Lake House in Saratoga Springs, New York during the mid-1800s. According to culinary legend, Crum invented the potato chip during his work at the restaurant.  Crum’s chip remained a local delicacy until the 1920s when a salesman and entrepreneur named Herman Lay (Lay’s Chip) began travelling throughout the south and introducing potato chips to different communities. At that point, Crum’s legacy was overtaken by the mass production and distribution of potato chips on a national scale.

Young Entrepreneur – Tyrell Harris

Fun Fact #4

You are the future

You will be writing the next chapter for Black History

Now it is your turn to write a legacy

What history and legacy do you want to create

Black history is not just about looking backwards. Its also about looking forward

What are people going to be reading about you in the next several years

* Let’s continue to learn, celebrate and respect each other, not just during Black History Month all year round

Reflecting on the accomplishments and contributions of all the black Canadians right here in Dufferin County, Young people who are being brave to use their voice to fight for change, Young people who are building their own businesses, breaking grounds by entering new spaces, I have faith that we are on the right path. These young leaders are passionate about making this world a better place and they have all demonstrated what black excellence means. They have helped to pave the way for each of us.

Don’t let soicety’s expectations of you determine your success in life. Go out and write your own story! Create your own legacy.